

Minister: Vacancy
Diaconate Lead: Mrs Janet Eastwood
Secretary: Mrs Dawn Davies
Treasurer: Mrs Eve Eates

Sandringham Road, Hunstanton PE36 5BN

www.unionchurchhunstanton.org.uk

Deacons

Date of Retirement

Dawn Davies	2025
Janet Eastwood	2025
Dawn Patterson	2025
Tony Ralph	2027
Eve Eates	2027

Everyone is welcome at
UNION CHURCH
An evangelical family church
serving God and the community

THE MONTH OF LOVE

This month we celebrate St Valentine's Day when we traditionally make a fuss of the one we love with either chocolates or flowers, or both if we have to make up for something we have done wrong!!

So, let's start with 6 facts about St Valentine:

1. St Valentine, as we know him, may have been the name of two Christian martyrs.
2. In all there are about a dozen saints named Valentine recognised by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches.
3. St. Valentine is not only the patron saint of lovers, but also beekeepers, epilepsy, the plague, travel and fainting (a busy chap).
4. It is claimed that his skull is on display in a church in Rome and other bits of his skeleton reside in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Scotland, England and France.
5. Geoffrey Chaucer is the first writer that is known to mention the romantic associations of St Valentine when he wrote his poem 'Parliament of Foules' in around 1375.
6. There are various other dates that celebrate St Valentine (if you forget the 14th Feb). There is St Valentine of Vilerbe on 3rd Nov, St Valentine of Raetia on 7th Jan, St Valentine or Valentina (the only female saint of that name) on 25th July and the Orthodox

church celebrates St Valentine's Day twice a year - 6th July as an elder and 30th July as a martyr.

Whether you go in for Valentine's Day in a big way or just quietly let it pass you by, you can't escape it. As soon as the New Year celebrations have finished the shops change their display ready for St Valentine's Day (and one supermarket had Easter Eggs for sale in the middle of December). After Christmas and Easter this is the busiest time for selling chocolate. I wonder what the original Valentine, martyred for his faith in Jesus, would make of all this.

Love should be celebrated but it is also important to remember the love that God has for us. We can so easily not realise just how much God loves us, or we can even take His love for granted.

Sometimes we think that God couldn't possibly love us, because we know exactly who we are, all our thoughts and actions. A lot of the time our thoughts and actions are not very uplifting or spiritual in any way. We know that if people really knew us then they wouldn't love us or have anything to do with us.

And this is the problem. We equate our human love, which is largely based on feelings, to God's love for us. His love is not based on feelings. It was not a warm fuzzy feeling that Jesus had for us that made Him go to the cross. It was His unconditional love for each and every person who has ever lived or will ever live that held Him on that piece of wood, not the nails in His hands and feet. There was a penalty to pay for our sins and Jesus paid that price because of love.

God's very nature is love as it says in 1 John 4 verses 8-10; *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Wow! That's who He is - love. No matter who we are, what we have done, God loves us! We cannot make Him love us any more than He does now, and we can't make Him love us any less that He does now. But we can refuse to accept His love, that is our free will. He will never force His love on anyone. Sadly, millions of people refuse His love, or have never heard about God's love for them.

Now, isn't the love of God worth celebrating much more than celebrating St Valentine's Day once a year. Let us remember the love that God has for us every day. And then we will be able to show that love to others every day.

A Prayer:

Lord, thank You for your everlasting love. I don't deserve to be relentlessly pursued by you, but that doesn't matter. You choose to love me anyway. That amazes me, and I want to accept it. I want you to transform my life. Please help me to see myself as you see me: as worthy of being loved by you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I will leave you with this story:

After she woke up, a wife told her husband, "I just dreamed that you gave me a gold necklace for Valentine's Day. What do you think that means?"

"You'll know tonight," he said.

That evening, the man came home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, she opened it - to find a book entitled "The Meaning of Dreams".

Happy Valentine's Day for the 14th if you are celebrating it, and if not, always remember, God loves you every day. And yes, He is especially fond of you!

Mark



DID YOU KNOW? OR HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW UNION

Who compiles the list for the pulpit supplies [the preachers each week]?

The Deacon responsible for the church fabric?

The person who cleans the church building each week?

Who takes the minutes at church Fellowship meetings?

How many outside groups use our building for their meetings?

How many Deacons do we have at present?

Psalms – The Soul

Welcome to the fourth in our series on the theme of The Soul, based on BBC Radio 4's "The Daily Service" in June 2024. The week-long series of short services took the theme of The Soul, drawing inspiration from The Psalms.

This instalment was prepared and presented by Rachael Mann:

4) Pour out my Soul

Today I want to meditate on the times when we pour out our souls to God. Every now and again we all get overwhelmed by fear. The wonderful thing about God is that he knows our deepest needs and responds to the groaning of our souls before we utter a word. Psalm 139 assures us that Jesus draws near to us and knows us more completely than we know ourselves. Nonetheless sometimes we need to pour out our souls to God - it is both deeply human and a profoundly holy thing to do. The ancient Spanish priest Saint John of the cross famously spoke of 'the dark night of the soul'.

In that phrase he encapsulated how our pilgrimage towards ever deeper union with God is not always easy. To come to a deeper, richer and truer relationship with God we should not seek to avoid life's challenges. However, as we dare to share our lives with God, our ups and downs, and our hopes and fears, in short, as we pour out our souls to God, we shall draw ever closer to him.

Prayer:

God of love help me to trust in you and give myself to your safekeeping this day and always, Amen

Psalm 42: 4-7

*"These things I remember
as I pour out my soul:
how I used to go to the house of God
under the protection of the Mighty One
with shouts of joy and praise
among the festive throng.*

*⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Saviour and my God.*

*⁶ My soul is downcast within me;
therefore I will remember you
from the land of the Jordan,
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.*

*⁷ Deep calls to deep
in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers
have swept over me."*

These words from Psalm 42 are perhaps around 3000 years old yet their power is undiminished. They are what you might describe as 'load bearing words', that is, they've been stress tested over millennia by the weight of human experience and have not been found wanting. In this Psalm the speaker is deeply troubled, but they remember those times when they've worshipped and praised God in the great feasts and holy days of their community. They seek to remind themselves that whatever distress their soul might be in right now, they have hope for the future because they've known hope in God in the past. What I love about this approach is that it is no mere attempt to optimism. The words of Psalm 42 seek to draw on

the promises of God. They revealed to us how the wonder and richness of God's presence and love can lift up the downcast. From the mountains to the oceans the deep love of God calls to us, and he will meet human suffering with his profound and abiding love.

Prayer:

God of hope, in Jesus Christ, you called us to enjoy fullness of life. In the midst of the troubles of this weary world may we be unafraid to let our souls be lifted up by you. God of love you come among us as one who serves, no matter the cost. Set us free to offer up our own lives to a world in trouble that it may better know your love. God of life, all good things that we have come from you and of your own do we give. May we respond to your abundant grace and gifts with gratitude. Amen

Blessing:

May the blessing of God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit meet the longings of our souls with the abundance of his love and the fulness of hope now and forever, Amen

Steve Tong



A general “thank you” to all the lovely volunteers who provide refreshments, music, bible readings, and everything that goes to making our Sunday morning services so welcoming to regulars and visitors alike. Be assured, you’re all appreciated.

We Received a card from Mags Salter, in which she told us a story from her church pastor.

"A gymnast got the message from the Lord that she must drive into a petrol station shop and do a handstand in front of the freezer cabinet. When she queried this, she became more convinced that she should obey! In the shop was only the shopkeeper, so she did a handstand against the freezer.....the man behind the counter burst into tears. What is the problem? "I was planning to kill myself" he said, " but told God if someone came in and did a handstand against the freezer, I would know He was real and cared for me".

Mags suggested it should go in the February magazine to show that God is loving, kind and real.

This preacher had come to preach with a view to becoming their new Pastor at Mags church.



CHURCH DIARY

Monday	February 3	Girlguiding District Meeting @ 7:30pm
Thursday	February 13	Deacons' Prayer Meeting at 9:30am
Saturday	February 15	Men's Breakfast at 9:00am £6pp. See notice board for more details.
Thursday	March 13	AGM and Fellowship Meeting at 6:00pm

All the above take place in the hall

Sunday	March 23	Parade Service
Saturday	December 13	Hunstanton Churches Together Carol Concert [tbc]
Saturday	December 20	Union Church Carol Concert [tbc]

WORD FOR TODAY

Doing God's will

'I delight to do thy will, O my God.'

Psalm 40:8 KJV

Doing God's will can be difficult, but it always brings a sense of fulfilment and reward. David experienced resentment from his family, betrayal by his boss, and rejection by his friends. Yet he could say, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' To fulfil your God-given destiny, you need to be passionate. Passion gives you an advantage every time. One person with passion is more effective than ninety-nine who only have an interest. Passion gives you energy and keeps you going when others give up. Indeed, it keeps you going when *you* want to give up!

Not only will God give you a passion for His will, but you will also discover abilities you didn't know you had. They may be undeveloped, but they're there waiting to be tapped. Some of us have inherent abilities, and we know *who* we are and *what* to do. Others must work hard to make these discoveries. Your goal should be to waste as little of your life as possible.

There is a big difference between having a God-given dream that pushes you to achieve and pulling a concept out of thin air that has no relation to who you are and what you're called to do. Just as a soldier on the front line must stay in communication with headquarters, you must pray daily and search God's Word. When you know that you're doing what God has called you to do, you experience joy in the midst of sorrow, peace in the midst of conflict, and confidence when everything around you is falling apart. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is more important than knowing you're doing the will of God.

We Welcome the following Preachers in February

Sunday	2	Dawn Patterson
	9	Graham Maddison
	16	David Crispin
	23	Tony Ralph



Thank you to the following ladies who have donated and arranged flowers this month.

February	2	Lucy Tristram
	9	Kay Drewell
	16	Heather Williams
	23	Alison Ralph



Happy birthday to those members and friends who share a birthday in

February:

6 th	<i>Kay Drewell and Daphne Johnson</i>
13 th	<i>Tony Ralph</i>
27 th	<i>Pauline Carruthers</i>



So, we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1

We can be sure that this letter was written to Christians from a Jewish background and that it was written to a particular church. Later in the letter we learn that the believers had suffered for their faith soon after they came to faith in Christ, but now they had become complacent and lazy. The writer was anxious that they might drift away from the truth. The expression “drift away” is one that is well known in Greek literature – it is used to refer to a ring slipping off the finger, some food slipping down the wrong way or a ship carelessly slipping past a harbour because the person at the wheel wasn’t paying attention. The writer wants the congregation to realise that in just the same way it is possible to drift away in their faith.

In my experience when people stop attending church it is rarely because they have come to a conviction that Christianity is wrong. They have simply drifted away. Perhaps they were busy at work, the children had other activities on a Sunday morning, somebody in the family was ill or they moved home. There was no deliberate intention to reject the Christian faith. Merely a slow, gradual, but in the end irreversible, drifting away.

The words of Hebrews are just as relevant today as they were 2,000 years ago. We all need to make sure that we are listening carefully to the truth, which happens most easily by each of us having good rhythms in our Christian life. Reading the Bible and praying every day, meeting with other Christians and joining together in worship are all valuable ways of ensuring that we don’t drift away. There are no laws about these things, but if we are to keep strong in faith, we need to look carefully at our personal rhythms to ensure that there is no possibility of us drifting away.

“Baby- basics”



West Norfolk

Baby Basics was founded in 2009 at The King's Centre Church in Sheffield. We are a small group of volunteers that meet once a week to provide vulnerable mums with essential items for their new born baby in West Norfolk and surrounding areas.

Baby Basics works with Midwives, Health Visitors and other professional bodies to provide starter packs for those in need. We help vulnerable groups such as teenage mums, asylum seekers, women fleeing domestic violence and trafficking, those facing poverty, homelessness and those in crisis.

We fundraise to purchase brand new Moses baskets with stands, which provide a safe bed to sleep in and are packed full of essentials such as nappies, wipes, maternity pads, as well as blankets, towels and baby clothes from newborn to 3 months. For some, these are the only items they may have for their baby.

We believe that Baby Basics shows God's love in action

As we are a voluntary group, we rely on donations for our starter packs. These include;

- Moses Basket Sheets
- Nappies (Size 1)
- Baby Wipes
- Maternity Pads
- Breast Pads
- Baby Shampoo, Wash, Lotion & Oil
- Baby Sponges
- Baby Towels & Hooded Towels
- Cellular Blankets
- Knitted Blankets
- Scratch Mittens
- Newborn & 0-3 Clothing (Like New & Fully Laundered)
- Baby Socks
- A Toy suitable for a Newborn Baby
- Shampoo, Conditioner, Shower Gel & Deodorant for Mum
- Toothbrush & Toothpaste for Mum
- A Gift for Mum



There are also other ways you can help Baby Basics;

- Praying for the project and the team
- Telling your friends about Baby Basics
- Knitting blankets, cardigan and other lovely items for newborn babies
- Contributing financially

Please contact Baby Basics via email or Facebook, as below. For details of where donations can be dropped off you can also visit our website.

Email – babvbasicswestnorfolk@gmail.com

Contact – 07708 173567

Visit – www.baby-basics.org.uk



For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land' Deuteronomy 15:11

Baby Basics is a charity with a local branch in Dersingham. If you like to knit perhaps you could provide some of the above needs.

NewsLetter DEADLine

The deadline for the
March 2025 issue is,

February 20th

but items can be submitted at any
time.